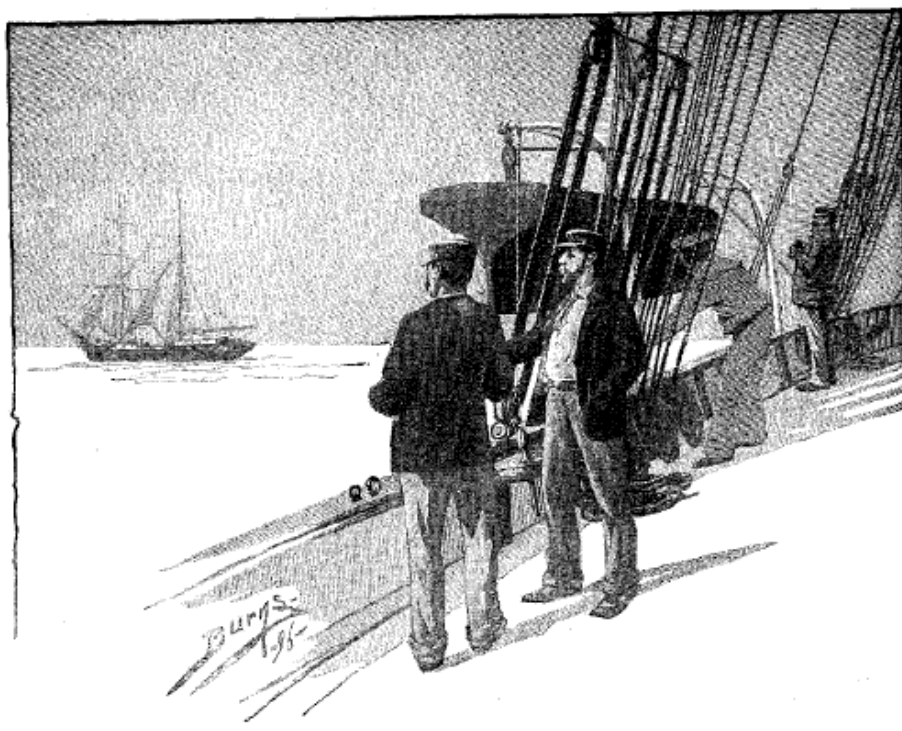




"I MADE HER OUT TO BE A SMART-LOOKING AND BEAUTIFULLY MODELLED CRAFT."

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE "EMILY BRAND" BRIGANTINE.

BY ANDREW HUSSEY ALLEN.

I HARDLY suppose that any one will believe this story. Indeed I would hesitate to tell it were it not that its principal events are to be found recorded in the correspondence of the Department of State, at Washington, and in the official reports of the Vice-Admiralty Court at Gibraltar, both of which sources of verification are, I have no doubt, accessible to the reader. I have myself seen the despatches of our consul at Gibraltar and can vouch for their substantial correctness.

I was at Nice, where I had been sent a month earlier a tardy and restless convalescent, when, on the morning of November 20th, I found among my letters at breakfast one from my old friend Jack Drayton, dated two days earlier "On board the 'Nomad,' Marseilles Harbor," and begging me to go for a cruise to the Azores with him. His fellow-voyagers, he wrote, had deserted him at Malta to go crusading to Jerusalem with some friends they had met there, and he urged me to go on this cruise with him as well on account of my health as on his account.

I called on my doctor, who agreed with Drayton that the voyage would set me squarely on my feet again, and as I knew of nothing that I would like better, I decided to go. I packed my trunks, took the early train for Marseilles, and boarded the yacht on the afternoon of the next day at five o'clock, and by eight the following morning we were under way.

The "Nomad" was a schooner of 230 tons, staunchly built for ocean cruising, and luxuriously equipped and furnished. Besides the captain, two mates, steward, cook, and Jack Drayton's servant, she carried a crew of seventeen men. Her owner was himself an able seaman, and his yacht was his home. He and I were such old friends and had lived together for so many years that we not only did not fear tiring of each other, but were reasonably sure of very good company. On this occasion, however, we had a companion in Roy, a thoroughbred English mastiff that Drayton, who was very fond of animals, had taken to sea with him for the two preceding years. I never had appreciated

before this cruise how much of a companion a dog could be. Roy quite won my heart. Unprejudiced by my affection for him, I think he was the noblest animal I have ever known. Stately, high-bred, intelligent, and lovable, he was "a gentleman and a scholar" from the jet of his handsome muzzle to the tip of his tawny tail.

We ran down the Mediterranean to the Straits with a fair, fast wind, feeling, as we passed the fortress, that we were well started on our voyage. But outside, on the ocean, *Æolus* became capricious, as is his wont, and bestowed his favors elsewhere. From that time on, until the fifth of December, we loitered sadly and uneventfully, with light northerly winds. On the morning of that day, however, the breeze freshened somewhat, the smooth surface of the sea began to glitter with little ripples, our spirits rose with the prospect, and soon after nine o'clock we sighted a sail about three points off the port bow—the only thing in sight on the broad expanse of blue, shining ocean. By noon we had approached the stranger near enough to see that she was a brigantine under short sail, and in a little while we were within hailing distance. Taking the glass, I made her out to be a smart-looking and beautifully modelled craft, and after a few minutes I read the name in gilt letters on her quarter as "Emily Brand." Except her jib and a staysail, she had not a stitch of canvas set. As I looked she impressed me with a sense of deathlike stillness, desolation, and mystery, and I could see that her wheel was loose, and that there was no one on her deck. The slight breeze that still prevailed was from the north, and the brigantine was on the starboard tack, while the yacht, as she had been for several days, was on the port tack.

I handed the glass to Drayton, who, after a short survey, told Captain Parker to hail. The captain, as we neared her, called repeatedly in stentorian tones, but no answer came, and no sign of life appeared on board the strange vessel. Finally, when within three hundred yards of her, we shortened sail, had a boat lowered away, and Drayton and I, with the first mate of the "Nomad" and two seamen, rowed alongside. Slowly drifting to leeward, she was barely moving, and Jamieson, the mate, clambered aboard by the gear of the bowsprit. He threw us a line, and, making the boat fast, we quickly followed him. He and the two men went

forward, while Drayton and I, crossing the deck to the companionway, which we found open, entered the cabin. It was empty. The men forward likewise finding no one, we all five searched the vessel fore and aft, and high and low. There was not a living being besides ourselves on board. She had evidently been deserted. But why? She was seemingly perfectly sound, and we failed to discover the least apparent cause for her abandonment. Her hold was exceptionally dry, there not being as much bilge in it as would fill a hogshead. Her cargo consisted of casks marked as containing alcohol, all of which were stowed in good order and condition except one, which had been started. The exterior of the hull above the water line did not exhibit the slightest trace of damage, nor was there the least evidence on the interior that the vessel had been repaired in any way or was at that time in need of any repairs.

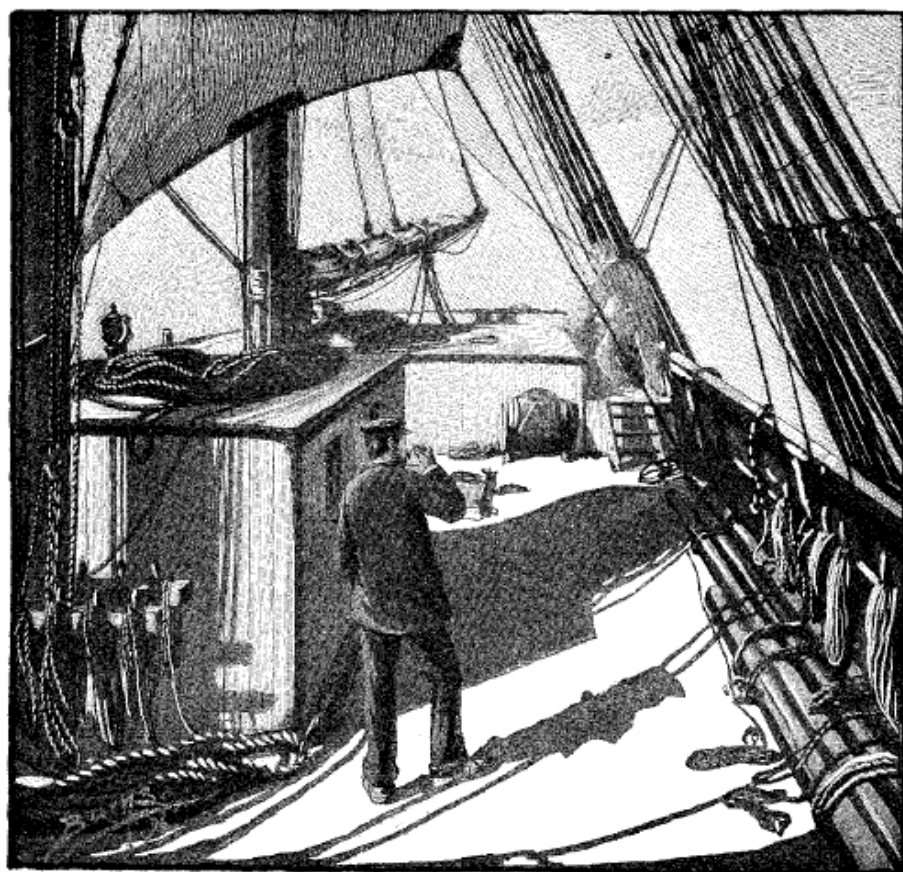
Among the seamen's effects were found a number of articles of not inconsiderable value, going to show that the men were comparatively well-to-do and apparently in a great measure free from the too common prodigality of their class. We also found that the vessel was amply provisioned and that she had plenty of good water in her casks.

Of her cabin I must say that I had no idea there was a merchantman afloat so comfortably and attractively equipped in this respect. The apartment was large, high, and well lighted, with four staterooms opening from it—two forward and two aft. On either side, along the bunks, were broad, thick hair cushions of crimson stuff. In the center the table with leaves was stationary, while in the space between the staterooms forward was a harmonium, open; and aft, in the corresponding space, stood a sewing-machine, also uncovered. On a chair beside the harmonium lay several music books and loose sheets of music, and on the sewing-machine we found a pattern in muslin, evidently a child's garment in process of making, besides a small phial of machine oil, a spool of cotton, and a thimble, all three in a perpendicular position: a fact which afforded additional proof that the vessel could not have encountered any stress of weather—not even enough, indeed, to upset these lightly balanced articles.

In the forward port stateroom, under the berth, we found an open box containing panes of glass packed in hay and unbroken. Hanging on the partition

opposite the berth, in the starboard state-room forward, we found a cutlass of somewhat ancient pattern, which, on extracting it from its scabbard, I discovered to be stained with what seemed to me to be blood. I called Drayton's attention to this, and, after examining it, he agreed with me and concluded that we had perhaps found a clue to the mystery. Later along we discovered marks on the main rail, apparently of blood, but by that time we had been forced to give up the idea that there had been any violence on board the vessel, by the perfect order in which we had found everything on board. The remaining articles of furniture in the cabin were two large easy-chairs upholstered in leather, and several smaller, lighter chairs. The carpet was a heavy Brussels, and the wood work was painted a pale, soft gray, with bluish trimmings. All the brass mountings and the lamps were bright and shining, and, in fact, the apartment was pervaded no less by an air of quiet order than of mystery. It was clear that it had been occupied in part by a woman and child, and these we naturally supposed to be the wife and child of the captain.

Our charts showed that we had boarded the derelict in latitude $38^{\circ} 20'$ north, longitude $17^{\circ} 15'$ west. In its proper place we found her log-book, but her chronometer, manifest, and bills of lading were missing. The log showed that the last day's work of the vessel had been on the twenty-fourth of November, sea time, when the weather had allowed an observation to be taken that placed her in latitude $36^{\circ} 56'$ north, longitude $27^{\circ} 20'$ west. The entries on her slate log were, however, carried down to eight o'clock of the morning of the twenty-fifth, at which hour she had passed from west to east to the north of the island of St. Mary's (Azores), the eastern point of which then bore south-southwest, six miles distant. The distance in longitude from the island of St. Mary's to the point at which we fell in with the "Emily Brand" is $7^{\circ} 54'$; the corrected distance of the latitude from the position last indicated in the log is $1^{\circ} 18'$ north; and the brigantine had apparently held on her course for ten days after the twenty-fifth of November, the wheel being loose all the time. But during the period from the twenty-fifth of November to the fifth of December the wind had been more



"I DISTINCTLY SAW A MAN STEP FROM THE RAIL AT THE PORT QUARTER."

or less from the north continuously, and it appeared to us impossible that the derelict could have covered within that time a distance of $7^{\circ} 54'$ east, at any rate on the starboard tack. The obvious inference was, therefore, that she had not been abandoned until several days after the last entry made in the log.

Drayton, who was nothing if not practical when occasion required, at once set about making his arrangements to work our prize to Gibraltar. He despatched the mate and the two men back to the yacht with orders to have Parker select five men from the crew, one to be in authority as sailing master, and send them aboard the brigantine prepared to take up their quarters. Meanwhile he returned to the cabin to look over the log-book again, and some papers we had found in the captain's room, and I went forward to poke about in the seamen's quarters, which were to be occupied by the "Nomad's" men.

Fifteen minutes later, standing by the foremast facing aft, I struck a match to light my cigar. As I raised my eyes from doing so, I distinctly saw a man step from the rail at the port quarter, move quickly across the deck, and disappear in the companionway. At the moment I caught but the briefest glimpse of his face and figure; but they were not to be forgotten. He seemed to have clambered aboard from the sea, for he was dripping wet and hatless, and his light hair was matted or glued about his head and face by the water, while his clothes clung to his body and limbs, and glistened and dripped in the sunlight. His figure was gigantic. His face and trunk were bloated or distended, like those of a man who has been drowned, and the former, without a vestige of color, was ghastly horrible and expressionless, even to the eyes, beyond the possibility of description. I was naturally startled and shocked by the suddenness of his appearance and his extraordinary condition; but not so much so that I failed to shout "Hallo there!" as I got sight of him. He neither answered nor hesitated; he did not even look towards me, but, almost as I uttered the words, disappeared, as I have said, down the companionway. I hurried aft and entered the cabin. There alone, with his feet on a chair before him and the log-book on his knees, was Drayton, quite calm, and half-facing the companionway. I looked around, saw no one else (all the stateroom doors were wide open), and exclaimed in amazement, "Where is he?"

"Where is who?" drawled Drayton.

"The fellow," I replied, "who just came in here. Wake up, Jack! I saw the man come in here this moment. He is here somewhere," I added, searching from room to room in vain, and trying to open a door in the forward starboard stateroom, leading, as I supposed, into the between-decks space. The door was fast, and bolted on my side of it.* No one had gone through there.

I turned back to the cabin, where my companion stood gazing at me curiously. He stepped towards me, looked at me very closely, and then said sharply:

"What's the matter with you, old man; are you out of your mind? How could any one have come in here without my seeing him?"

I described the man, and added that I could swear I had seen him enter the cabin three seconds before me.

Finally, somewhat impressed by my positiveness, Drayton, in spite of himself, went on deck, I following, and hailing the yacht, he called out: "Let the men, when the boat comes over, bring the dog with them." And then, to me, "If there is any one on board here Roy will find him though we can't."

As we turned back to the cabin I noticed that that part of the deck over which I had seen the stranger pass, dripping with water, five minutes before, was perfectly dry, as were also the brass plates on the companion-ladder down which I had seen him disappear. This discovery bothered me not a little, as may be readily imagined. Still I remained firm in my conviction that I had actually seen the man, and had not, as Drayton evidently believed, simply suffered an optical illusion.

I paced the deck until the yacht's boat arrived with the men and Roy. When they had boarded the brigantine Drayton came on deck again, and we made another thorough search of her with the dog running on ahead and with the aid of two bull's-eye lanterns that the men had brought over. This second search was as fruitless of result as the first. By the time we had finished it was after five o'clock, and we were at the point of returning to the yacht, to prepare for dinner, when we decided that it would be best to

* We afterwards opened this door and discovered that it led into the between-decks space, where we found amidships, adjoining the cabin, the ship's store-room, which we had entered and examined during our original search of the vessel. On either side of this store-room were arranged a number of casks of alcohol, which composed the cargo. There was nothing else to be found, and no possible corner where any one could have been concealed. Our original entrance to this part of the brigantine had been through the main hatch, from the deck above.

lock the cabin. We entered it for that purpose, and after having secured the doors of the staterooms, and closed the ports, we turned to leave it, Drayton preceding me towards the deck. Half-way up the companionway it suddenly occurred to me that I had left my cigar-case on the table, and I returned to get it. As I again stepped into the apartment I saw, clearly defined, at the upper end of the bunk on the starboard side upon the partition, close by the stateroom door, the shadow in profile of the face and figure of a man. The shadow appeared to be cast by some very tall person sitting on the bunk to my right, forward; but there was no one there, as a matter of course. I began to doubt the evidence of my senses, and stood for a moment looking about me in bewilderment. Recovering myself, however, I approached the corner, convinced that the dark gray shadow was a stain upon the paint. Apparently it was not. From the chair near the harmonium I took a loose sheet of music, and, holding it between the shadow and the light, I looked behind it and perceived that that portion of the shadow—a part of the head and face—between which and the light I had interposed the obstacle had been obliterated. On looking at the surface of the paper in my hand, I beheld the missing portion of the shadow clearly silhouetted thereon. Having thus satisfied myself that it was a shadow, and one cast by some (to me) invisible and impalpable thing or substance, I hardly need add that I became somewhat excited. I shouted to Drayton, who immediately ran back into the cabin, followed by the dog. His examination of the phenomenon resulted exactly as mine had. On turning, at its conclusion, to speak to Roy, we found to our surprise that he had left us. Although we tried our best, neither by persuasion nor command could we move him to enter the cabin again. We looked at each other nonplussed, Drayton and I, and I am willing to confess that mingled with my feeling of triumph at having thus convinced him that there were others at work besides ourselves aboard the mysterious derelict, was an uncomfortable consciousness that the weird annoyance was beginning to tell on my nerves and to excite my imagination disagreeably as to what was to come next. Still I entertained not the least doubt that we were the victims of some vulgar jugglery practised upon us for some unexplained reason by hidden human agents. I was morally positive that

this was the case. I had not, of course, had time to reason with myself as to the logic of the conclusion, but it was the only natural one, and certainly no other explanation of what I had seen occurred to me. Consideration of possible supernatural causes or solutions was out of the question with both of us. Jack Drayton was as free from all superstitious fancies as he was incapable of fear, and I may claim to have been his counterpart in the former respect.

Slowly, as we looked upon it, the strange shadow faded out. After a vain search of half an hour, and fruitless experiments with the lights and shadows of the cabin, we locked the companionway and returned to the yacht to dine.

By eight o'clock, having completed our arrangements, we went back to the brigantine to pass the night in her cabin. Roy received us on deck, and we tried again, but in vain, to induce him to enter the apartment with us. His refusal annoyed us both. It was incomprehensible. We, however, prepared ourselves for the night. Drayton established himself in the forward starboard corner on the bunk, looking aft—the shadow's corner. I made myself comfortable in the port corner aft, diagonally opposite and facing him. We thus between us commanded a full view of the cabin and the four staterooms, the doors of which we had reopened. The dog roamed restlessly about the decks until a little before midnight, when I heard him lie down across the entrance to the companionway.

At a quarter to one o'clock—I looked at my watch at the moment—without any premonition, the three cabin lamps—one over Drayton's head, one over mine, and one in the centre, over the table—suddenly became dim. This was surprising, as we had carefully filled and trimmed them all before lighting them. I got up to examine that nearest me, turning my back to Drayton. As I did so I heard the peculiar double click of the hammer of a pistol. Turning again, I saw my companion, with his cocked revolver in hand, step to the floor. His face was pale and rigid, and his eyes fierce and fixed. He moved to the table and raised the weapon. With an indescribable sensation of dread I looked in the direction of his aim, and there, not five feet from where I stood, on the inside edge of one of the ports, I saw a large, coarse, bloated hand clinging, and behind it, outside, at the shoulder, the ghastly, brutal face of the man I had seen

cross the deck in the afternoon. The dull, lead-colored eyes seemed peering into the cabin. Almost overcome by mingled horror and disgust (I can convey no idea of the loathsomeness of this man's appearance), I was somewhat relieved by the cold, clear tones of Drayton's voice, as I heard him say:

"Now, my man, I have you in range. I'm a passable shot, and if you move, I shall fire. Who are you? and what deviltry are you engaged in here?"

There was no reply. After a pause, Drayton spoke again:

"I intend to have an answer. If you don't speak up before I say three, I shall fire, anyway. We are not to be trifled with."

Still there was no reply; and after a pause of about ten seconds, Drayton counted very slowly, "one—two—three," and then followed the flash and report of a pistol.

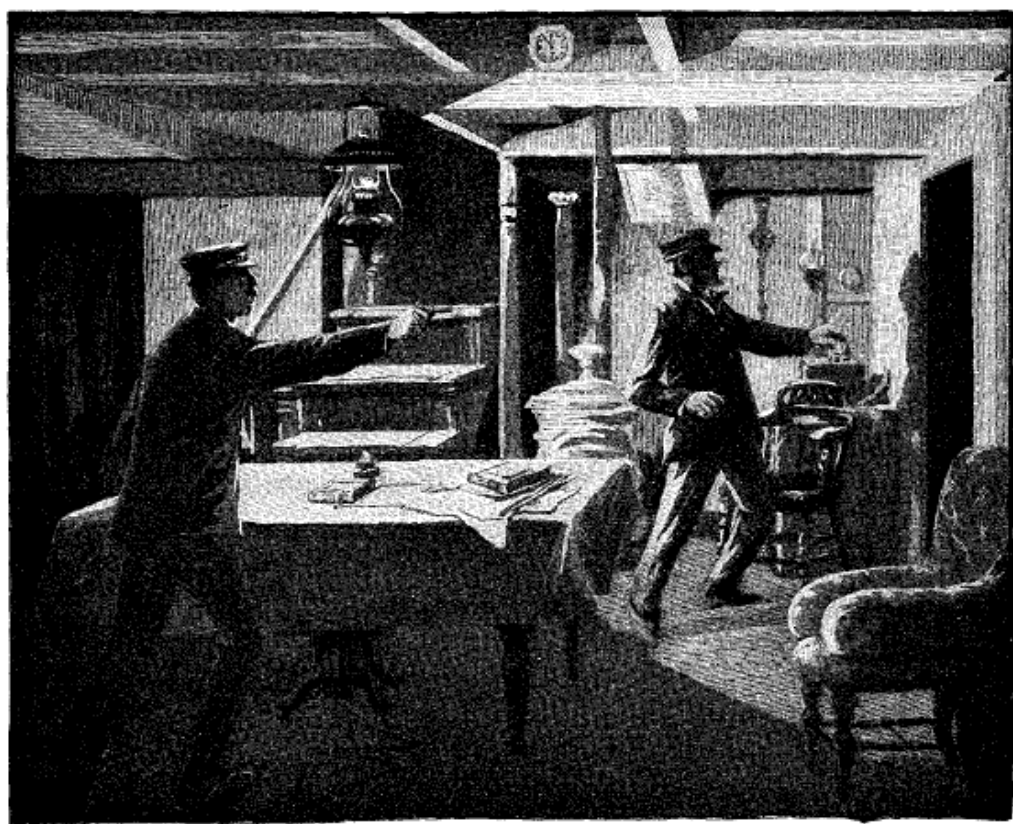
The man at the porthole did not move. Drayton, with wonderful nerve, raised the weapon again; but even as he did so the face and hand disappeared. Not instantly; but, as if drawn slowly back, they seemed to be swallowed up in the darkness without. As they faded away, the light in the

cabin waned again; and crying to me, "Stay where you are, and keep the dog with you" (the dog had bounded into the cabin, half involuntarily, I suppose, at the report of the pistol), Drayton hurried on deck.

I seized Roy's collar, and, at the moment, the doors of all four staterooms, although there was not the slightest lurch of the vessel, slowly but steadily swung and silently closed, as did also the skylights, the ports, and the sliding hatch and doors of the companionway, shutting me in alone with the dog.

My recollection of what followed is perfectly clear—nay, vivid—but it is not in my power to write an adequate description of it. All I can do is to relate what occurred as I actually saw and felt it. Appreciation of the horror of my position I must leave, with but an intimation of it, to the imagination of the reader.

On finding myself thus closed in, my first undefined idea, naturally, was to reach the deck and call Drayton. I was startled, but I do not think that I was afraid at first. Some new trick was about to be played upon us, and I wanted him to see what it was with me. It did not occur to me that the companion-hatch could have been



"IF YOU DON'T SPEAK UP BEFORE I SAY THREE, I SHALL FIRE."

made fast, so I turned to the steps, the dog accompanying me closely—too closely, in fact. As I raised my foot I felt that I was unable to place it on the first stair. It was as though the exit from the cabin had been walled up. A second attempt was equally in vain. I endeavored to precipitate myself into the companion-way. I might as well have tried to walk through a wall of solid rock, and still, in extending my hands and looking before me, I felt nothing but a soft though forbidding pressure, and saw nothing but the open stairway. I cannot say whether my sensation was one of terror or bewilderment—perhaps it was a mingling of the two. I called aloud with the full strength of my lungs, but the sound of my voice seemed strangely muffled, even while I was perfectly conscious that I had full possession of my senses. During all this time the dog had been pressing close against me, trembling like a leaf, shuddering. I laid my hand on his head. It was hot to the touch. I looked down at him. With his ears laid back, his eyes protruding, and his tongue hanging out, he was the picture of terror—such a picture as I hope never to see again. A great, fearless, noble mastiff utterly abject, and cowering like any little cur.

And now the cabin lamps were suddenly extinguished, and only a small lantern left burning on the table. The atmosphere became oppressively hot, and a musty, moldy odor pervaded the apartment. In the deepened darkness I turned to look behind me with an added foreboding—if my horror may be said not to have reached its acme already. Beneath the door of the starboard stateroom, forward, I saw a brilliant line of light, and in the same place as before, the weird shadow of the afternoon, now bent over as though he who cast it there were listening at the door. With my hand still on the mastiff's head, and impelled by some power not my own and stronger than my will, I moved towards the shade. My third step placed me directly in front of one of the large leather lounging chairs, which was so situated as to squarely face the dreadful corner. Into this chair I sank not only involuntarily, but seemingly by physical compulsion, the dog standing against it beside me. As again I laid my hand upon him I felt that he was rigid and strained in every muscle. As I gazed at the shadow it slowly became upright and huge, and cast itself clearly upon the door, which immediately swung open without sound.

With this phenomenon an indefinable sensation of almost intolerable pressure came upon me. I felt as though bound with iron or encased in lead. The chair seemed to hold me in a vice-like embrace. All power of motion left me. I tried to speak. I was dumb. The silence was awful. My sense of loneliness appalling. My mind, however, was most active and acute, and after a moment, every faculty seemed to be concentrated upon attention to what was going on before me.

Within the stateroom I saw a short, thick-set man seated on a camp-stool beside the berth, under a hanging lamp which shed a brilliant light. With his face in his hands and his head leaning against the partition before him, he seemed asleep; but I could not see that he breathed. Behind him and half turned from me, I saw one standing who seemed to me to be the original of the shadow, and who, as I looked, raised his right arm in the air, and dealt the sleeping man a terrible blow at the back of the head with a heavy marline-spike, crushing the skull and killing the victim instantly. No blood followed the stroke, and, although, as I have said, the room was brilliantly illuminated, I saw no shadows. The murderer seized the dead man's body before it fell to the floor, and opening the forward door of the stateroom, which led into the between-decks space, passed out, dragging the corpse with him, and disappeared in the darkness. Almost at once, however, he returned, and as he came towards me into the cabin, I again recognized the horrible face of the giant I had seen cross the deck above in the afternoon—the face of the man at whose hand I believed that Drayton with unerring aim had fired in the open port-hole a little while before. He entered the apartment, and, following with my eyes the direction of his movements, I saw him extend his hand and take up from the bunk, where he might have been sitting a few moments earlier, what appeared to me to be a carpenter's chisel or screw-driver. With this he again vanished into the darkness between decks. As he did so the forward door of the stateroom closed behind him, and simultaneously the light within went out, and the lamps in the cabin were relighted, while the doors and portholes, skylight, and companion-hatch were, I felt, reopened. My hand being still upon the dog, I perceived a tremor or shudder pass through his entire frame, as with a deep sigh he instantly thereafter dashed from the cabin to the deck. I heard Drayton's

voice call loudly, "Roy! Roy!" and then a splash in the silent sea.

Freed from the terrible pressure, I now arose blindly to make my own way to the deck from the stifling atmosphere of the cabin; but the walls and furniture seemed to whirl and spin around and around me—and I remembered no more.

When I recovered consciousness I was again seated in the heavy chair, the cabin was cool, and there was the odor of brandy about. Drayton was standing over me with his hand on my forehead, and I heard the tramp of feet on the deck above. I looked at my watch, which I had laid open on the table several hours earlier, and it told me that I had been in the cabin alone with the dog but ten minutes at the uttermost.

From my companion I learned that after leaving me he had called the forward watch and one of the men from the deck-house, and searched fruitlessly for a trace of the man at the port-hole. As he had approached the companionway, the dog had dashed from it, foaming at the mouth, and in his madness leaped into the sea. Every effort was made to save him, but we never saw the poor fellow again.

The remaining hours of the night passed without incident. I related to Drayton what I had seen in the cabin, and we agreed that whatever the power that was exhibiting itself on board the brigantine—whether human or superhuman, natural or supernatural—it was one that we certainly could not account for, theorize as we might. Drayton, however, held to his purpose of taking the vessel to Gibraltar, there to turn her over, with as much of her story as we could tell, to the Vice-Admiralty Court for investigation.

In the morning we made an examination of the room in which I had seen the phantom murder committed (if I may describe as "phantom" those who seemed no less real flesh and blood than myself) and of the between-decks space forward of it, but we discovered nothing. At the edge of the port-hole, however, at the spot where the hand had been, we found the bullet from the revolver buried in the wood.

By this time the seamen had gotten an inkling of the character of the ship's mystery; but as none of them had actually seen anything (nor, strangely enough, had heard the shot) Drayton's good sense and firmness triumphed over their superstition, and we were enabled to work the derelict to port without difficulty and without further incident. A second night passed in her cabin by both of us was quiet and unevent-

ful in every way, but we were satisfied that we had discovered the cause of her abandonment. The sailors would have said that she was haunted.

We made Gibraltar on the morning of the thirteenth of December, and immediately reporting the circumstances under which we had found the "Emily Brand," we turned her over to the authorities.

The Queen's Proctor in Admiralty at once ordered a special survey of the vessel by the surveyor of shipping, assisted by the marshal of the court and an expert diver. The result of this survey was a report substantially embodying the facts as to the finding of the vessel and her condition here related by me. In addition to this, however, the stains on the old cutlass and on the vessel's rail were subjected to a chemical analysis by which it was proved that they were not blood stains, and this fact was made an item of the report.

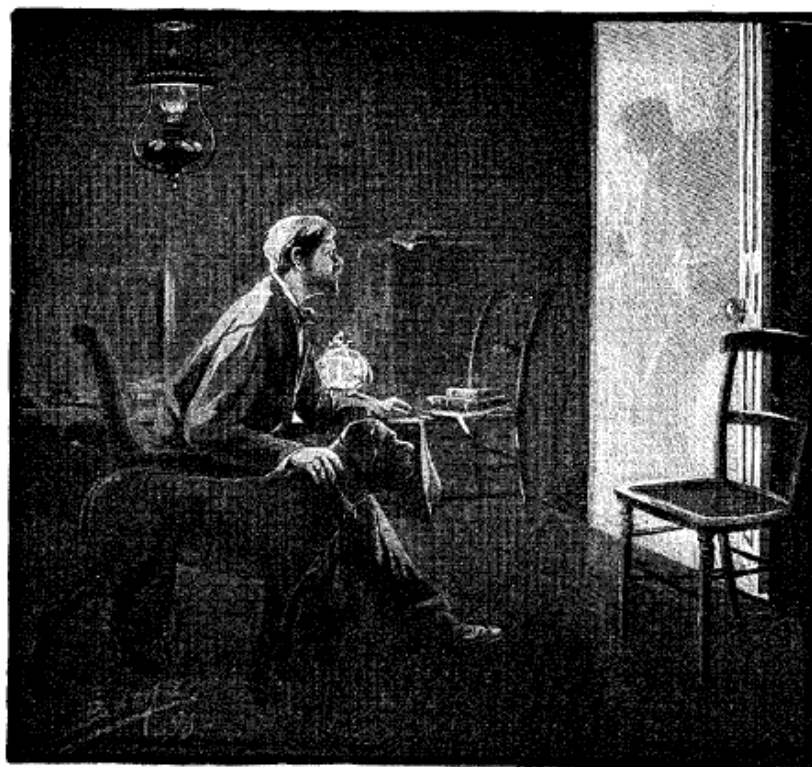
Upon this unsatisfactory conclusion Drayton and I determined to communicate to the authorities an account of the almost incredible events of our first day and night aboard the mysterious vessel. This we were enabled to do without making ourselves ridiculous, through the good offices of the governor of the fortress, to whom Drayton was well known. Thereupon a second survey was ordered, during which the entire cargo was removed.

At the request of one of the officials engaged in this second survey, I accompanied him aboard the brigantine for the purpose of pointing out the movements of the phantom murderer. This official developed a rather remarkable detective ingenuity. He subjected me, in the course of our conversation, to a close cross-examination concerning the chisel or screw-driver, for which the assassin had returned after the murder. On my remaining firm in my conviction as to what the tool appeared to be, he confided to me his theory of the terrible mock murder I had witnessed. He believed, he told me, that the crime which had caused the vessel's abandonment had been revealed to me "by the spirits," as he expressed it, "of the principal actors." Proceeding on this theory, he personally (permitting me to accompany him) made a careful examination of the fatal stateroom and of the now empty between-decks space forward, his object being to discover some evidence of the use of such a tool, to the appearance of which he attached the greatest importance. At a point about fifteen feet distant from the stateroom he found a narrow strip of oak about an inch in

thickness and five feet in length, projecting, by its thickness, beyond the smooth surface of the vessel's inner shell. On scrutinizing it closely we perceived that it had been fixed in its place by means of five screws, apparently of brass, as the heads were incrustated with bright green rust or mould. We immediately summoned assistance, procured a screw-driver, and removed the strip. Having accomplished this, we discovered that the strip had been affixed over a perpendicular succession of the joints

of the narrow planks of the vessel's interior hull, which sprang outward as they were released, far enough for my companion to insert his fingers behind them. Wrenching them off, we found to our horror, wedged in the inner space, the grinning skeleton of a man, upon which hung shreds of clothing. As this skeleton was lifted out, something dropped to the deck with a metallic sound, and rolled to my feet. I stooped and picked it up. It was a plain band of gold—a ring. On the inside was engraved: "From H. M. to J. B." The clothing of the unfortunate man appeared to have been partially eaten by rats. At the time it seemed to me a fortunate thing that it had not been entirely destroyed, as otherwise the ring, which had been retained in one of the folds, would long before have slipped from the bony finger to the bottom of the hold, and rendered positive identification, perhaps, impossible. The skeleton was clean, dry, and white, and on further examination we found that the back of the skull had been fractured, apparently by a blow from a club.

Since our arrival at Gibraltar, and about a week before the finding of the skeleton, Drayton had written to the owners of the brigantine at New York, having learned who they were from the surveyor of ship-



"I SAW ONE . . . WHO, AS I LOOKED, RAISED HIS RIGHT ARM IN THE AIR, AND DEALT THE SLEEPING MAN A TERRIBLE BLOW."

ping, to whom her missing captain had been well and favorably known. In his letter to these gentlemen Drayton had asked for such a history of the "Emily Brand" as her owners were willing and prepared to give. He particularly required a full account of her missing company, and the details of any mutiny or other crime that might have occurred on board within their knowledge, with a description of the participants. At the end of about three weeks from the date on which the skeleton was found (we in the meanwhile having had a run up the Mediterranean and back) a new captain and new crew arrived from New York, sent out by Messrs. Barnes and Spaulding, to take the brigantine on to Genoa, for which port she had been originally bound. The captain, Mr. Church, presented himself on board the "Nomad" the day of his arrival, as the bearer of a long letter to Drayton from Mr. Barnes, the senior member of the owning firm. From that letter I transcribed the ensuing account of the "Emily Brand."

"The brigantine was built for us about two years ago at Portland, Maine. Including her present voyage she has made four in all. The first two were prosperous, and on neither of them did anything out of the ordinary run occur. A year ago last

November, however, she sailed from this port, with a miscellaneous cargo, for Lisbon, taken out by Captain James Blaisdel, who had been in our employ for many years, and who had commanded her on her two preceding voyages.

"Among her crew was a Swede or Norwegian of the name of Peterson; a gigantic, ill-favored fellow, who had been injured in our service some time before by a fall from the rigging, in which he sustained a severe contusion of the brain. For several months he lay in the hospital here, in what was believed to be a hopeless condition of imbecility; but finally, having recovered, or apparently recovered, he applied for a berth on the 'Emily Brand.'"

"On the eleventh of December we received news by cable from Mr. Riggs, the mate, of the death of Captain Blaisdel and the man Peterson. On the twenty-sixth a letter came, giving the particulars, which were briefly as follows: About the eighth day out from New York Peterson developed symptoms of a relapse of his disease (caused by the fall), which seemed, however, to affect his mind only with a sort of intermittent stupor. He exhibited no signs of mania or violence, and was capable of performing his light duties about one half the time. He was accordingly not confined, and the master did what he could for him, treating him with the utmost kindness, and advising him to lay off from his work. This he did for several days, but apparently without beneficial effect.

"On the night of December 5, Mr. Blaisdel turned in at eight bells (twelve o'clock). The weather was clear, the wind over the port quarter, and the moon lighted up the deck. The vessel was then about latitude 38° north, longitude 17° west, near the point at which you picked her up. Just before two bells (one o'clock) the man at the wheel saw Peterson, whom he recognized by his great size, cross the deck amidship to the starboard rail and throw something into the sea. On being hailed by this man, Peterson went aft, and said that he had thrown a pair of old shoes overboard. He was in his stocking feet.

"In the morning the master failed to appear, and after waiting a reasonable time the steward knocked at his door. Receiving no response, he called Mr. Riggs, the mate, who entered the stateroom and found it empty. The berth had not been occupied. When after a search it became evident that the captain could not be found, Miller, the man who had taken the wheel at midnight, told the mate of Peter-

son's appearance and his conversation with him. Peterson was sent for, and found in his bunk, apparently sleeping. He was aroused, and brought on deck in a very excited condition, and on being interrogated by Mr. Riggs he became incoherent and violent. The mate thereupon ordered two of the men to seize him; but as they approached to do so, he eluded them, and darting to the vessel's side, went overboard. They put her about and lowered a boat immediately, but he was never seen again. It seems clear that in a fit of insanity he murdered the captain and threw his body into the sea during the night. How this was accomplished no one knows, for no noise was heard, nor were any traces of violence found about the vessel.

"On her present voyage Mr. Riggs, the former mate, went as master of the vessel. He was, I believe, thirty-six years of age, married, and had one child—a little girl of five or six years. It is our custom to allow our masters to purchase an interest in the vessels they command, and Mr. Riggs and his wife owned two-sixteenths of the 'Emily Brand.' He was a man of the highest character and thoroughly competent to go as master. On this last voyage his wife and child accompanied him.

"I cannot form the slightest conjecture concerning the strange disappearance of poor Riggs and his family, with all on board, and I have but little belief that they will ever be heard of again."

From this letter it became evident that the skeleton found up in the between-decks space was that of Captain James Blaisdel, with whose name the initials engraved in the ring corresponded.

The remains thus identified were interred at Gibraltar.

Some hope of the rescue of the castaways was for a time entertained, as it was learned that the boat (the brigantine had but one) in which they were presumed to have left the vessel was a life-boat, new, light, and incapable of sinking. Moreover, it was known that they could not have encountered any bad weather for many days after parting from the "Emily Brand." Accordingly the widest publicity was given to the fact of their having disappeared, and for more than a year the civilized world was searched throughout with all the facilities at the disposal of our own government and that of England, upon the chance that they had made some land or been picked up by some passing vessel. But no trace of the life-boat or of any of its occupants was ever discovered.